Government of
Saskatchewan

Annual Report
1998-99

Saskatchewan
Northern
Affairs

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Annual Report 1998-99

Saskatchewan Northern Affairs

For the fiscal year ending
March 31, 1999.

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Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Lynda Haverstock
Lieutenant Governor
Province of Saskatchewan

Dear Madam:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of the Office of Northern Affairs for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999.

Keith Goulet
Minister of Northern Affairs

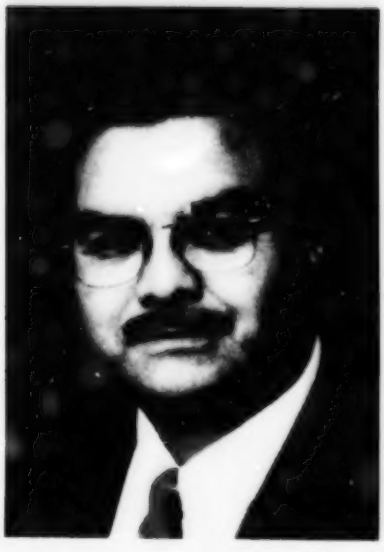
The Honourable Keith Goulet
Minister of Northern Affairs
Regina, Saskatchewan

Dear Sir:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Office of Northern Affairs for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999.

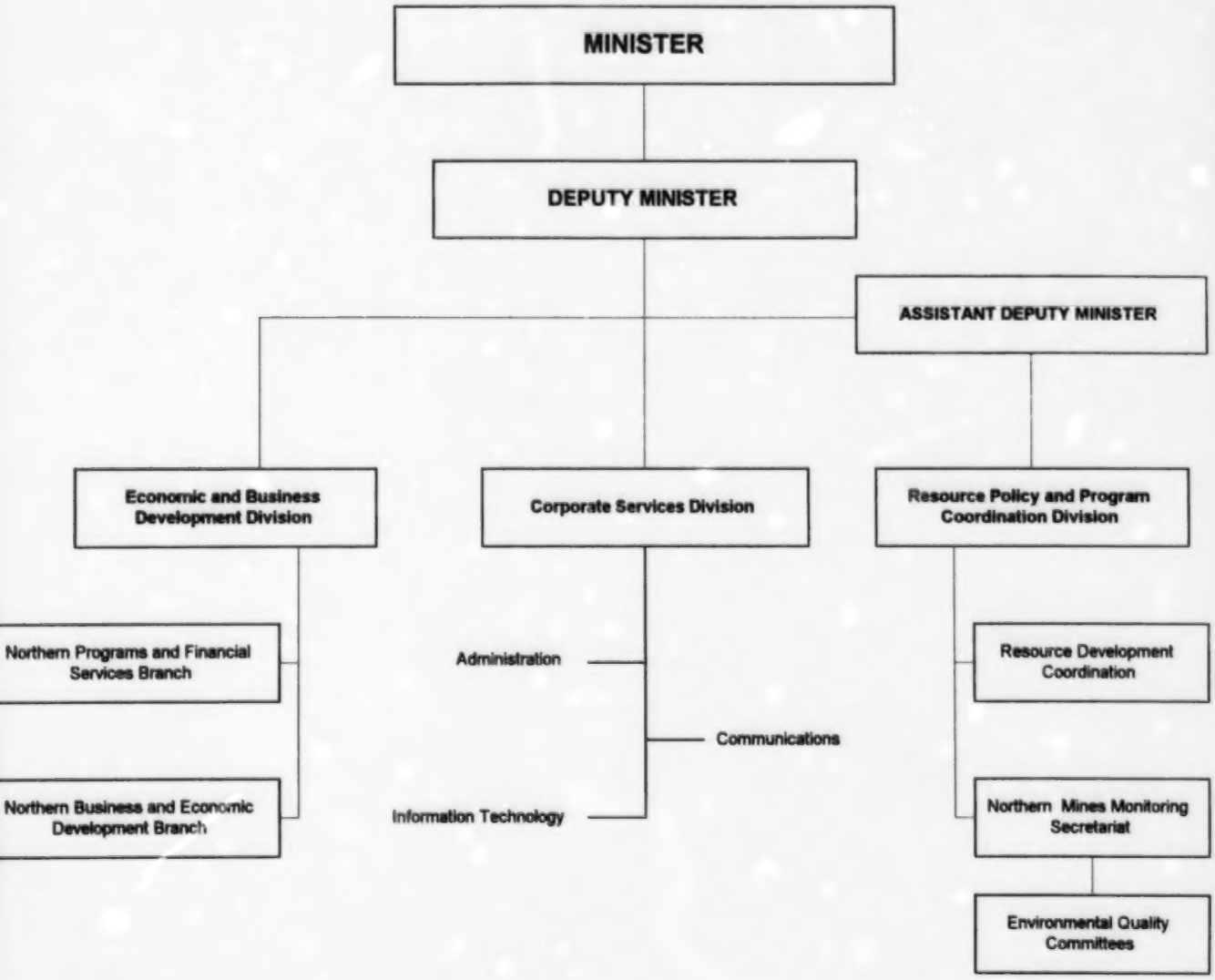
Respectfully submitted,

Alex Campbell
Deputy Minister



Northern Administration District (NAD)

Organization Chart



Saskatchewan Northern Affairs Overview

The Office of Northern Affairs was established in early 1996 under the legislative authority of *The Northern Affairs Act*. Its purpose is to improve the planning and coordination of provincial government services in the Northern Administration District (NAD), and to address northern issues and policy development. The Office is guided by a mission statement, a mandate, and five strategic priorities for the North.

Mission Statement

The people of northern Saskatchewan will possess the means to address the goals and aspirations they have for their communities, their families and themselves. With respect for northern people, their cultures and traditions, the provincial government will work as an active partner with northern communities, Aboriginal authorities, business and industry to promote the social and economic development of the North.

Mandate

The mandate of Saskatchewan Northern Affairs is to promote the social and economic development of northern Saskatchewan communities. Northern Affairs works in partnership with federal and provincial departments, industry and communities to enhance the planning, coordination, integration, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, projects, and government communications.

Northern Strategic Priorities

The five strategic priorities for the North, as adopted by the Government in 1997, include:

- *continued improvement of education and training for northerners;*
- *increasing economic development in the North and developing a skilled labour force, with a focus on promoting employment and business development in the resource sectors;*
- *improving the infrastructure of northern communities;*
- *enabling northerners to achieve greater control over institutions and issues directly affecting them; and*
- *increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of Government in northern Saskatchewan.*

Organization and Structure

Saskatchewan Northern Affairs is headquartered in La Ronge where the Deputy Minister and three operational divisions are located.

Following appointment of a new Deputy Minister in late 1998, development of a Strategic Plan for the Office of Northern Affairs was initiated late in the fiscal year. The Strategic Plan, to be completed in 1999-2000, is intended to ensure that the structure and operational plans of Northern Affairs are appropriate to the goals, objectives and priorities of the organization. It will also address the government's objective to ensure that performance management and accountability measures are in place for each provincial department and agency.

To address Northern Affair's increased role in coordinating provincial government program evaluation, development and implementation in the north, the position of Assistant Deputy Minister, based in Regina, was created in late 1998. The position facilitated senior liaison with other provincial departments and agencies, a key requirement to coordinate provincial support for the Northern Strategy (described below). The Assistant Deputy Minister also maintained direct responsibility for the Resource Policy and Program Coordination Division.

Programs and Services

As documented in this report, during the 1998-99 fiscal year, Saskatchewan Northern Affairs continued to be involved in a broad range of activities related to the Northern Administration District (the region defined by *The Northern Municipalities Act, 1983*, as shown on the map on page 4). These activities included program delivery, northern policy development, inter-agency coordination, and provincial government communications.

Northern Affairs' program responsibilities included:

- loans, grants and business development services of the Northern Development Fund;
- Commercial Fishing Freight Subsidy and Price Support Program;
- negotiation and administration of mineral surface lease agreements;
- operation of the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat, including support for northern Environmental Quality Committees; and
- support for the Multi-Party Training Plan in cooperation with the Northern Labour Market Committee, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, and the other partners in the Plan.

The Office of Northern Affairs also provided a focal point for northern access to the provincial government. Individual northern residents, communities and organizations frequently contacted Northern Affairs seeking assistance, information, or referrals on varied issues and interests.

The Northern Strategy

A major responsibility for Northern Affairs during 1998-99 was the continued development and administration of the Northern Strategy.

During 1997-98, the provincial government initiated the "Dialogue with Northern Leaders". This consultation process was to address socio-economic issues and recommendations arising from the Joint Federal-Provincial Panel on Uranium Mining Developments and to contribute to the development of a Northern Strategy.

The Dialogue process included participation of northern First Nations, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, northern municipalities, and representatives from the provincial and federal governments.

Through the Dialogue, consensus was reached on the overall needs and priorities of northern Saskatchewan, particularly the need for economic development and diversification to create jobs for the north's growing labour force.

The provincial government responded to that consensus by drafting a Northern Strategy framework. Premier Roy Romanow and Northern Affairs Minister Goulet reviewed the proposal with northern leaders at La Ronge in May 1998 and Wollaston Lake in June 1998. At those meetings, the proposal was discussed, amended and adopted through a Northern Strategy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU was signed by the Province, the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities (representing municipalities), the Prince Albert Grand Council (including the Denesuline First Nations of the Athabasca region), the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. The MOU committed the signatories to work in partnership to achieve the goals of the Strategy.

The MOU included a vision statement, five goals, 21 objectives and three enabling mechanisms to foster new initiatives for socio-economic development in the North. (These are outlined in this annual report on pages 10 and 11.) The three specific "mechanisms" included:

- A **Northern Development Board** to provide for on-going participation of northern leaders, with the provincial and federal governments, in implementing measures supporting the Northern Strategy goals.
- A **Strategic Opportunities Assessment** to document where public and private investment can best be made to further develop and diversify the northern economy, creating northern business and employment opportunities.
- A proposed **Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement** through which the federal and provincial governments could support new investment in the northern economy, including associated infrastructure and capacity building.

In the fall of 1998, the Minister of Northern Affairs created the Interim Northern Development Board, which held its first meeting near Beauval on December 7, 1998, attended by Premier Romanow. The Board was created on an interim

basis pending successful negotiation of a Canada-Saskatchewan Agreement.

Members of the initial Board included:

SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN COMMUNITIES:
Mayor Max Morin, Ile a la Crosse – Board Co-chair
Mayor Joan McDonald, Stony Rapids
Mayor Wilfred Boychuk, Creighton (A)

PRINCE ALBERT GRAND COUNCIL
Vice Chief Ed Benoanie, Wollaston Lake – Board Co-chair
Edward de Jong, Prince Albert
Don Deranger, Stony Rapids (A)

MEADOW LAKE TRIBAL COUNCIL
Chief Elmer Campbell, Dillon
Vern Bachiu, Meadow Lake
Lawrence McIntyre, Meadow Lake (A)

MÉTIS NATION OF SASKATCHEWAN
Al Rivard, La Ronge
Philip Chartier, Buffalo Narrows
Don Favel, Ile a la Crosse
Dale McAuley, Cumberland House
Michelle Snowshoe-Frazer, La Ronge (A)
Ray Laliberte, Buffalo Narrows (A)

ATHABASCA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING CORPORATION
Chief Edwin Bonelye, Black Lake
Chief Flora Natomagan, Wollaston Lake
Chief Napoleon Mercredi, Fond du Lac (A)

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN
Alex Campbell, Deputy Minister, Northern Affairs
Ernie Lawton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
Richard Turkheim, Assistant Deputy Minister, Northern Affairs (A)

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
Roy Bird, Regional Director-General, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Randy Brothen, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Ray Gamracy, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (A)

(A – Alternates)

The interim Board's mandate was to initiate and monitor a Strategic Opportunities Assessment and to provide input into developing the proposed Northern Development Agreement.

The Board selected a private consulting firm to undertake the first phase of the Assessment, which began in January 1999.

The results of the Strategic Opportunities Assessment and the Board's deliberations will be used to encourage increased private and government investment in northern Saskatchewan and to establish priorities for the proposed Canada-Saskatchewan Agreement.

Through several briefings, the background, purpose, structure and commitments of the Northern Strategy were outlined for provincial departments and agencies. Northern Affairs began a process to coordinate provincial initiatives related to the Strategy's goals and objectives.

Northern Hire and Northern Procurement Policies

During 1998-99 Northern Affairs finalized the development of Northern Hire and Northern Procurement policies. The policies are designed to increase northern participation in provincial government employment and purchasing. The policies were made public in January 1999 for implementation in 1999-2000.

Under the Northern Hire Policy, northerners meeting qualifications will be given preference for northern government jobs, after consideration of in-service candidates. Northerners are defined as persons having resided ten years or half of their life in the Northern Administration District.

The policy provides for new initiatives to ensure northerners are aware of provincial employment opportunities. As well, a Northern Candidates Inventory is to be created by the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission. It is anticipated that new training initiatives will be developed to support the objectives of the Policy.

The Northern Hire Policy is administered by Northern Affairs, Saskatchewan Public Service Commission, and the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Under the Northern Procurement Policy, all provincial agencies must seek price quotations and contract bids from suppliers within the Northern Administration District for goods and services required in the north. No price preference is included in the policy but, where appropriate, other cost-effective criteria will be included in northern tenders – e.g. provision of northern storage and maintenance services.

Northern advertising and distribution of tenders will be expanded, government purchasers will use the *Northern Saskatchewan Business Directory* as a key reference when tendering, and business advice will be available to help northern companies make successful bids. (An on-line version of the business directory is maintained by Northern Affairs.)

The Northern Procurement Policy is administered by Northern Affairs, Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, and the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan.

During 1998-99, Northern Affairs provided briefings and information materials about the two policies to provincial departments and agencies. Public advertising of the policies and development of related Internet information systems were initiated.

Special Grants

In addition to its Northern Development Fund grant programs (described in the Economic and Business Development Division section of this report), Northern Affairs facilitates individual initiatives in the interest of the development and well-being of northern Saskatchewan. Special grants approved for this purpose in 1998-1999 included:

- continuation of a contract position, cost-shared in partnership with the Athabasca Denesuline Nations and the Prince Albert Grand Council, to facilitate creation of an Athabasca region CREDO and assist in coordinating economic development and training activities in the region;

- extension of an agreement with the Saskatchewan Research Council, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, and Northlands College, to deliver the Industrial Research Assistance Program in northern Saskatchewan. Under the program, offered by the National Research Council, an Industrial Technology Advisor, located in La Ronge, provides consulting and referral services to northern companies. The position is a source of expertise to encourage technological innovation in northern economic development;

- pending implementation of alternate funding mechanisms, support for the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities to provide operations and services on behalf of northern municipalities;

- a contribution to a community fund-raising initiative in the La Loche area to assist families whose principal residences were destroyed by fire;

- an archaeological investigation project in the Brabant Lake area;

- a publication project documenting the culture and lifestyle associated with trapping through stories and photographs from northern Saskatchewan;

- provision of information materials related to Métis governance considerations in northwest Saskatchewan; and

- a workshop organized by the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation respecting hydro-electric generation and water resource management in northeast Saskatchewan.

The Northern Strategy

(as referenced in the Northern Strategy Memorandum of Understanding signed by northern leaders, the Premier and Minister of Northern Affairs in 1998)

VISION:

The people of northern Saskatchewan will possess the means to address the goals and aspirations they have for their communities, their families and themselves. With respect for northern people, their cultures and traditions, government will work as an active partner with communities, Aboriginal authorities, business and industry to promote the social and economic development of the North.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. **DEVELOP A STRONGER AND MORE DIVERSIFIED NORTHERN ECONOMY, CREATING JOBS AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**
   - develop the potential of northern economic sectors
   - establish partnerships among governments, communities and industry to promote economic growth and diversification
   - increase northern participation in, and benefits from, economic development activities (e.g. forestry, tourism, mining)
   - strengthen northern businesses' access to financial and business support services
   - enhance northern entrepreneurs' ability to provide goods and services to industry and the public sector

2. **ENHANCE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL ASSIST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVE NORTHERN LIVING CONDITIONS**
   - improve transportation, energy and communication services
   - improve municipal and community services such as sewer and water, land use planning and zoning, health and recreation facilities
   - increase the availability of adequate housing and support the further development of housing markets

3. **STRENGTHEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE NORTH; ENABLING NORTHERNERS TO PURSUE FURTHER ACADEMIC GOALS AND TO BETTER COMPETE IN THE LABOUR MARKET, BOTH IN THE NORTH AND BEYOND**
   - expand educational approaches to improve school retention and completion rates
   - strengthen adult education and literacy programs to improve the labour market opportunities for mature northerners
   - improve access to training programs to gain skills and practical experience
   - improve entrance rates to post-secondary institutions

4. **INCREASE COMMUNITY SELF-RELIANCE AND ENHANCE NORTHERNERS' OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN, AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR, NORTHERN INSTITUTIONS**
   - enhance child development programs
   - increase participation of northerners in public service employment
   - improve access to information, training, administrative and technical expertise to better develop organizational skills and foster community development
   - facilitate the delivery of justice initiatives that respond to northern cultures and support community and social development
   - work with communities to lessen dependence on social assistance

5. **INCREASE NORTHERNERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE NORTH**
   - strengthen the research and communication services of the Environmental Quality Committees
   - develop and apply, with northerners, new models of co-management in administering northern resources
   - work with northerners to build expertise in reclamation of abandoned resource development sites
   - in partnership with northerners, undertake reforestation of non-renewed forest harvest areas
   - restoration of species' habitats to ensure Northerners' ability to continue practising traditional lifestyles, while also contributing to new opportunities for economic diversification (e.g. ecotourism)

PROPOSED NEW <u>ENABLING MECHANISMS</u> TO HELP ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. **STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT**
   - analysis of each sector of the northern economy to determine where public and private investment will achieve self-supporting economic diversification and job creation
   - $150,000 1998-99 provincial budget allocation to immediately begin the process, building on existing information and undertaken with the Interim Northern Development Board
   - additional funds to be determined for work in 1999-2000, to ensure assessments are complete within 18 months

2. **CANADA-SASKATCHEWAN NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT**
   - a multi-year cost-shared investment in economic development and diversification, targeted to commence April 1999[1]
   - consideration of an "equity investment" vehicle
   - associated investment in infrastructure and "capacity building" that will facilitate economic diversification and opportunities for employment and business development by northern people
   - based on input from the Interim Northern Development Board, the Province will initiate discussions with the federal government immediately

3. **NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT BOARD**
   - a twelve-person board[2], created and funded under the Northern Development Agreement, to oversee the Strategic Opportunities Assessment and the Agreement
   - two members named by each of the: Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, New North (Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities), Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC), Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC), Saskatchewan and Canada[3]
   - in co-operation with the Northern Dialogue Steering Committee, the Province will create an Interim Northern Development Board, pending federal agreement to establish the proposed Board under the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

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[1] Details of the proposed Agreement were delayed until 1999-2000.

[2] During the fall of 1998, the parties agreed to change the Board size to include 16 members.

[3] It was agreed the Interim Board would have two members from each of New North, PAGC, MLTC, the Athabasca Economic Development and Training Corporation, Saskatchewan and Canada. The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan would appoint four members, one from each of its northern regions.

Economic and Business Development Division

The Economic and Business Development Division of the Office of Northern Affairs provides financial and business support services to northern entrepreneurs, businesses, cooperatives, community development corporations, and other organizations.

These services include the identification and evaluation of business opportunities, business plan development, financing through the Northern Development Fund and other sources, organizational development, management counselling, business skills training, and other advisory services.

The Division provides strategic and developmental assistance to a number of economic sector associations and actively participates in various interdepartmental and interagency forums, representing economic and business development interests in northern Saskatchewan.

The Division also provides referrals to other government programs and services.

These financial, professional, and technical services are vital in developing the northern economy and assisting northerners to successfully respond to potential business opportunities. These opportunities are in resource sectors such as forestry and mining, new and emerging industries such as special forest products and eco-tourism, and the traditional pursuits of commercial fishing, trapping and wild rice.

Northern Development Fund

The Northern Development Fund (NDF) was established in February 1995 to stimulate and support economic and business development in northern Saskatchewan, and encourage diversification and job creation.

The Northern Development Fund provides:

- commercial loans to northern businesses;
- primary production loans to trappers, commercial fishermen, and wild rice growers;
- grants for marketing, research, and development;
- grants for organizational development and business skills training; and
- financial support for Community-based Regional Economic Development Organizations (CREDOs).

During 1998-99 the Northern Development Fund's financial activity exceeded $3.3 million in loans and grants for northern business development and for support of CREDOs. This level of activity represents a 10 per cent increase over 1997-98.

During the year the NDF played an important role in increasing the participation of northerners and northern businesses in many sectors of the northern economy.

Loans

In 1998-99 the Northern Development Fund supported economic and business development in the North through a loan program (see figures 1 and 2), that included approval of:

- 22 commercial loans, totalling $2,217,015; and
- 55 primary production loans, totalling $255,285.

During the fiscal year, the NDF assisted with the start-up of four new commercial businesses and the expansion of 18 others.

Four of the commercial loans were syndicated, with several lenders sharing the financing, security, and risk, allowing larger projects to be funded. In addition to its own loan funds, the NDF took a lead role in managing $890,000 of loan funds from several other funding agencies for these four projects.

Syndicated loans represent an important collaboration among agencies involved with northern economic development. Such loans are increasingly being applied to support larger economic development and diversification projects.

In 1998-99 commercial loans assisted with the creation of 84 jobs and the maintenance of 16 others. In the primary production area, 14 jobs have been created and 123 maintained in seasonal harvesting activities in commercial fishing, trapping, and wild rice

Cumulative activity in the four-year period since the Fund was established in February 1995, includes:

- $6,579,585 in commercial loans;
- $845,022 in primary production loans;
- principal repayments of $4,191,947;
- 412 commercial sector jobs created;
- 52 primary production jobs created; and
- 91commercial businesses created or assisted.

Grants

During 1998-99 the NDF supported marketing and research, and organizational and business skills development, through a grant program (see figure 3), that included approval of:

- 40 grants for marketing, research, product development, and pilot projects worth $388,477; assisting northerners in tourism, eco-tourism, forestry, primary production, small manufacturing, heavy construction, and community/industry joint ventures;
- 11 grants for organizational and business skills development projects, totalling $77,900, supporting youth entrepreneurship training, local economic development seminars, planning and development for volunteer boards, and wild rice harvester construction training.

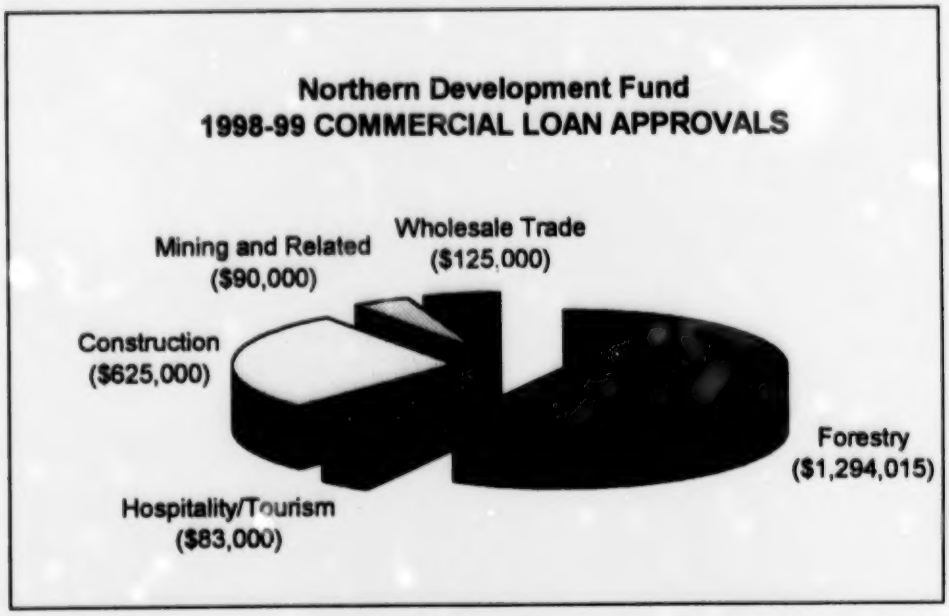

Figure 1. 1998-99 Northern Development Fund Commercial Loans summary by industry sector.

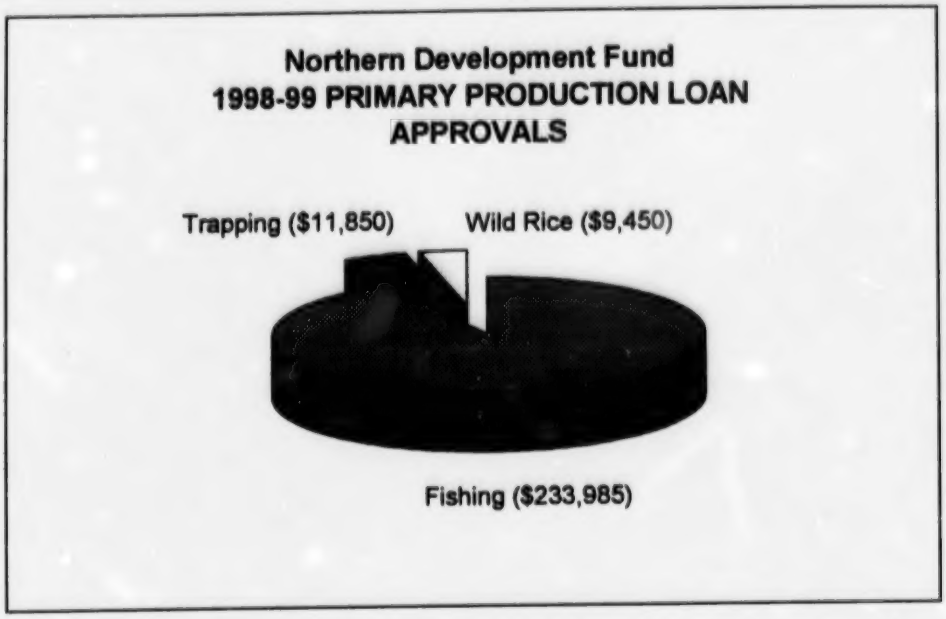

Figure 2. 1998-99 Northern Development Fund Primary Production Loans by industry sector.

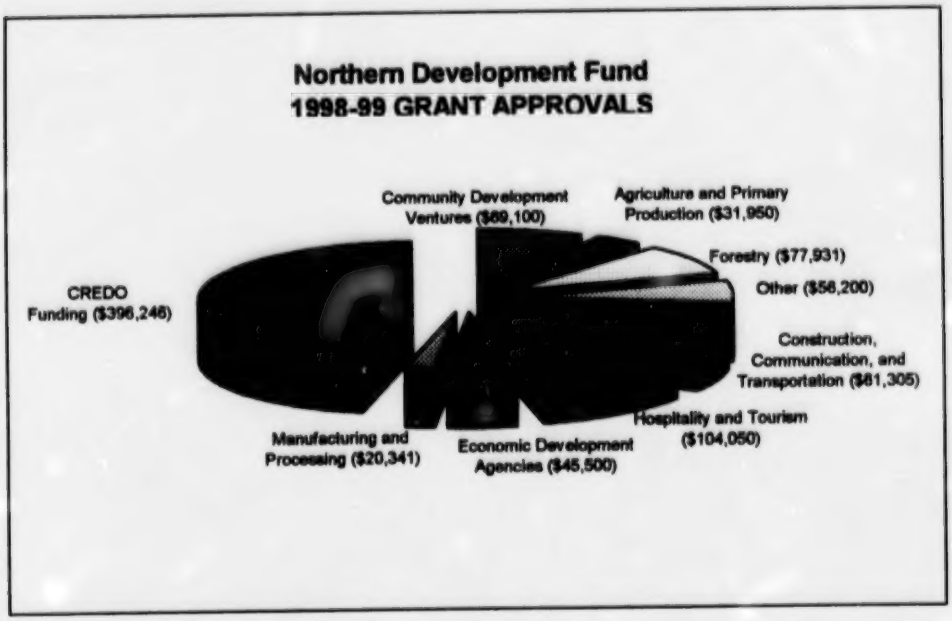

Figure 3. 1998-99 Northern Development Fund Grants by sector.

Community-based Regional Economic Development Organizations (CREDOs)

During 1998-99 the NDF supported Community-based Regional Economic Development Organizations (CREDOs) with funding of $396,246, including:

- seven grants of up to $60,000 each to assist the CREDOs; and
- one grant of up to $5,000 for organizational, legal, planning and other costs associated with start-up of Montreal Lake/Weyakwin/ Timber Bay CREDO.

The purpose of the CREDOs is to develop an improved capacity at the regional level for the delivery of grassroots community economic development services and initiatives.

CREDOs are legally incorporated as either non-profit corporations or non-profit cooperatives and are regulated by either *The Non-profit Corporations Act* or *The Cooperatives Act*.

Members of a CREDO may include municipal governments, First Nations, development corporations, Métis organizations, and community-based developmental groups resident within the CREDO target region.

The seven CREDOs supported by the NDF during 1998-99 include:

- Dazi Regional Development Corporation (representing Buffalo Narrows, Dillon, Michel, St. George's Hill, and Turnor Lake);
- Three Rivers CREDO Board Inc. (Beauval, Canoe Narrows, Cole Bay, Green Lake, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Jans Bay, Patuanak, and Pinehouse);
- Clearwater Regional Development Corporation (La Loche, Bear Creek, Black Point, Garson Lake, and Descharme Lake);
- La Ronge/Air Ronge Community Development Corporation (La Ronge, Air Ronge, and Lac La Ronge Indian Band);
- Creighton-Denare Beach Regional Development Corporation (Creighton and Denare Beach);
- Northeast Economic Development Association (NEDA) (Cumberland House, Deschambault Lake, Jan Lake, Pelican Narrows, and Sandy Bay): and
- Athabasca Economic Development & Training Corporation (Wollaston Lake, Hatchet Lake, Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Fond du Lac, Uranium City, and Camsell Portage), in operation for the latter part of the year.

Additional funding and support were provided for several economic development activities initiated by the regions. These included:

- funding to support a Northwest Economic Development conference hosted by the three west side CREDOs;
- a project by the La Ronge/Air Ronge CREDO to assess the feasibility of natural gas extension to the region;
- funding assistance for the Athabasca region to investigate northern opportunities related to transportation and mining developments in the region;
- funding to the west side CREDOs to assist in the establishment of a northwest regional forestry development corporation;
- funding to the Creighton-Denare Beach CREDO for participation in an inter-provincial marketing publication for the region; and
- skill training sessions in entrepreneurship, ecotourism, and board training.

Northern Review Board

The Northern Review Board (NRB) is composed of experienced business people, leaders, and professionals from various northern communities. Board members provide liaison with northern communities in guiding the activities of the NDF.

During 1998-99 the Northern Review Board:

- provided recommendations to the Minister on 18 commercial loan applications over the $25,000 threshold;

- reviewed and made recommendations on CREDO funding; and

- provided advice and feedback to Northern Affairs staff on NDF policy and other matters related to northern economic development.

Board members during the year included:

- Joe Daigneault of Beauval, Board Chairperson: program coordinator with Northlands College, member of the Saskatchewan Métis Economic Development Association, and vice-chair of the Northwest Saskatchewan Municipalities Association;

- Louis Bear of Sandy Bay: Band councillor with the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, member of the Northeast Economic Development Advisory Council;

- Doug Gailey of La Loche: village administrator, store owner, manager of Methy Construction;

- Val Martin of Creighton: owner of Val's Bookkeeping Service, member of the Creighton Housing Authority;

- Donald McKay of Cumberland House: teacher, village councillor, and board member of the Cumberland House Development Corporation;

- Denise D'Amour of La Ronge: director of program management with Northlands College, member of several regional boards, co-chair of the Northern Apprenticeship Committee;

- Mary Denecheze of Wollaston Lake: assistant manager of Welcome Bay Skidoo and General Store, member of health and education boards;

- Earl Cook of La Ronge: director of the Northern Branch of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.

Commercial Fishing

Freight Subsidy and Price Support Program

The Commercial Fishing Freight Subsidy and Price Support Program supports the commercial fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan through two components:

- a freight subsidy to help equalize transportation costs for fishers throughout the North; and

- a price support mechanism to compensate for reduced prices or increased operating costs.

The freight subsidy helps offset high transportation costs for fish shipped from more distant and remote areas to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation processing plant in Transcona, Manitoba. (The Corporation is a federal Crown corporation.)

During 1998-99, support provided to the northern commercial fishing industry by Northern Affairs included:

- payments under the fish freight subsidy and the price support program totalling $243,812;

- a core organizational funding grant of $25,000 for the Saskatchewan Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative Federation Ltd.;

- additional funding of $5,000 for SCFCFL to hold a special meeting; and

- an annual payment of $15,000 to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation for administering the fish freight subsidy and price support program.

During 1998-99 the program helped support more than 500 licensed fishermen in northern Saskatchewan, each employing one to three helpers.

Examination of the Commercial Fishing Industry

Fishers have increasingly expressed concerns that low prices, high shipping costs, centralized fish processing and inadequate marketing supports are limiting returns to the industry in Saskatchewan. In co-operation with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and the Saskatchewan Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative Federation Ltd., Northern Affairs initiated plans to review the state and potential of the commercial fishing industry.

In late 1998-99, Northern Affairs sought consultant proposals to undertake an analysis that would:

- identify options for improving the operational efficiency and economic returns associated with the commercial fishery;
- document existing constraints to increasing the viability of the industry;
- provide information to assist commercial fishers and the government in discussing measures that may be taken to enhance the industry; and
- inform discussions between the Government of Saskatchewan, Government of Canada and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation as to options for strengthening the industry in Saskatchewan.

The examination of the industry will be completed during 1999-2000. The results of the study will then be reviewed with fishers and other industry participants to develop initiatives that may assist to revitalize commercial fishing in the province.

Northern Business Opportunities Forum

Northern Affairs partnered with the Jim Brady Development Corporation and Northern Shores Tourism Association in April 1998 to co-host a second northern Business Opportunities Forum in La Ronge.

The Forum is an annual business conference and trade show designed to support the growth of northern business and employment opportunities. It has four objectives:

- to provide information and seminars of use to northern entrepreneurs;
- to focus on business achievements in the North;
- to raise awareness of future opportunities and challenges; and
- to stimulate new business formation and partnerships with key industry sectors.

Forum '98 was titled "Guiding the Tourist in Northern Saskatchewan" and focussed on the potential to strengthen the tourism sector of the northern economy.

During the Forum, delegates expressed interest in developing a coordinated approach to tourism planning in northern Saskatchewan. As a result, Northern Affairs created the Northern Saskatchewan Tourism Task Team.

The Task Team includes representatives of the northern tourism industry, Aboriginal Business Canada, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, Northern Affairs, and related agencies.

Through the rest of the year the Task Team worked to achieve a coordinated approach to tourism, identifying appropriate roles for the members, becoming familiar with industry challenges, and identifying specific sustainable tourism opportunities in the north.

To begin the development process, the Team saw the need for a detailed review and analysis of existing tourism strategies and plans relevant to northern Saskatchewan. In January 1999, the Team solicited proposals for the project. In March, Anderson/Fast & Associates of Saskatoon were contracted to undertake the industry review.

Resource Policy and Program Coordination Division

The Resource Policy and Program Coordination Division of Northern Affairs actively participates in many aspects of northern resource development, working with northern communities, industry and government on a broad range of policies, issues, projects, and program initiatives.

The Division has also become increasingly active in a number of human services initiatives designed to help facilitate social development in the North.

The Division provides:

- policy advice to government on initiatives and activities that are targeted towards, or may have implications for, the North;
- extensive analysis of northern project proposals and their potential implications for other policy and program initiatives; and
- interdepartmental coordination to ensure effective and efficient policy and program delivery in northern Saskatchewan.

Northern Resource Development

Mineral Surface Lease Agreements

During 1998-99, the Division continued to administer mineral surface lease agreements for mines located on Crown land in the Northern Administration District. These agreements provide the proponent with land tenure and, in the case of uranium mine developments, ensure appropriate provincial regulatory control over environmental protection and worker health and safety. They also address training, employment and other socio-economic benefits for northerners from northern mining operations.

All mining companies operating in the North are required to negotiate a surface lease agreement with the provincial government each time they plan a new project. Northern Affairs, in cooperation with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and other provincial departments and agencies, coordinates the preparation and administration of these surface leases.

Administration of northern mineral surface leases involves many functions, including:

- preparing property assignments, assignments of interest, and assignments of the lease as collateral security;
- coordinating and processing legal surveys, and partial or full surrenders;
- facilitating the resolution of issues arising among industry, government and the public; and
- ensuring proponent compliance with mineral surface lease obligations.

During the year, the McArthur River mine site was used to establish a template for all new and renegotiated uranium surface leases.

In 1997, a Joint Federal-Provincial Review Panel on Uranium Mining Developments in Northern Saskatchewan completed its six-year environmental assessment process. The Panel scrutinized all aspects of five different uranium mining proposals. Public hearings included meetings in many northern communities

The first project the Panel recommended for approval was McArthur River. The proponents received both federal and provincial environmental approvals, and a surface lease was required for the project to proceed to the production stage.

As a model for the renegotiation of all other northern uranium mine surface leases, the new McArthur River surface lease builds on the firm standards already in place for northern uranium operations.These include stringent requirements for environmental protection, worker health and

safety, and training, employment and business benefits for Northerners.

The benchmark surface lease developed for McArthur River captures the applicable commitments made by the company and the government during the Panel's review of the project's Environmental Impact Statement. Reporting requirements by the company have also been strengthened.

The manner in which the new McArthur River surface lease was developed was also new. For the first time in the history of surface leases, northerners, through their Environmental Quality Committee representatives, were involved in reviewing and providing input into drafts of the new model surface lease and appendices. Five consultation sessions were held over an eight-month period. All three Environmental Quality Committees participated in a review of the documents on a line-by-line basis.

In addition to the McArthur River site, the Key Lake mine/mill complex was also renegotiated in 1998-99, using the benchmark model.

The Division continued to administer 15 existing surface leases for northern uranium, gold, and copper mines in various stages of development from construction through to post-decommissioning monitoring.

These included the Rabbit Lake, Midwest, Cigar Lake, McClean Lake, Cluff Lake, McArthur River, Key Lake and Beaverlodge uranium mines; the Parks Lake Tailings Management Facility at Rabbit Lake; the Contact Lake, Seabee, Jolu, Star Lake and Komis gold mines; and the Konuto copper-zinc mine near Denare Beach.

During 1998-99, administration and negotiation of surface leases included:

- obtaining comments from provincial regulatory/developmental agencies and industry;
- undertaking consultations with the three Environmental Quality Committees (EQCs) and preparing an in-depth response to the EQC members' concerns and issues raised;
- securing the submission of the required legal survey for an approved mining operation;
- meeting with mining companies to review operational planning requirements in light of strengthened performance monitoring and reporting requirements;
- encouraging, receiving, reviewing and circulating mining companies' annual submissions of Northern Business Reports and Forecasts; and maintaining liaison with colleague departments regarding the monitoring, review, and follow-ups related to the reports and forecasts;
- coordinating Ministerial approval of a request for an extension of a surface lease agreement;
- researching legal opinions regarding Freedom of Access to Information and its effect on confidential monitoring information submitted to government by mining companies;
- preparing new surface lease agreements for McArthur River and Key Lake, circulating them to regulatory and developmental agencies for review and approval, planning and participating in negotiations with Cameco Corporation, resolving outstanding issues, and drafting the necessary documents for Cabinet approvals;
- processing a Discharge of Assignment of Lease as Collateral Security for one gold mine property; and
- processing Assignments of Interests for the Key Lake, Rabbit Lake and Midwest Joint Venture uranium projects to accommodate project ownership changes among the original proponents.

Human Resource Development Agreements

Each mineral surface lease requires the mining company to enter into a separate Human Resource Development Agreement (HRDA) in which the employer commits to efforts to increase the hiring, training, and advancement of northerners and to increase the utilization of

northern contractors and businesses.

The goal of each HRDA is to reduce the barriers which otherwise prevent northerners from taking full advantage of the potential for economic and social development associated with mining projects in the North.

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST) negotiate HRDAs with the mining companies, in consultation with Northern Affairs. The HRDA requires each mine operator to develop a Human Resource Development Plan. This plan is reviewed annually for each project and identifies the employer's strategy for improving northern socio-economic benefits.

During 1998-99, the Division continued to work with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training in the administration of the HRDAs.

Northern Labour Market Committee

The Northern Labour Market Committee (NLMC) is the main forum in the North for government, employers, and other agencies to address issues relating to employment, training and economic development. It meets on a quarterly basis.

The NLMC identifies emerging labour market and economic development issues in northern Saskatchewan, developing recommendations and initiatives to enable northerners to benefit from employment and economic opportunities.

Participation in the NLMC includes: federal, provincial, Aboriginal and municipal governments; Aboriginal and other non-government organizations; training institutes; economic development groups; the forestry, mining, construction, and trucking industries; and related business services.

The Committee has several sub-committees, including: the Mineral Sector Steering Committee, the Northern Apprenticeship Committee, the Forestry Training Committee, the Education and Training Sub-Committee, the Gary Tinker Federation Sub-Committee, the Career Services Sub-Committee, and four regional training councils.

The Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs serves as a co-chair of the NLMC. The manager of the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat continued to represent Northern Affairs on both the Mineral Sector Steering Committee and the Education and Training Sub-Committee.

During 1998-99, the Division's main role within the Education and Training Sub-Committee was to participate in the development of a Northern Education Indicators Program.

Using the provincial model, and with extensive input from northerners, the committee is working to create an Education Indicators Program based on questions and concerns with education in northern Saskatchewan. The resulting document will be used to enhance education services delivered to northerners at all levels.

The Northern Labour Market Committee has played a central role in northerners' successes in gaining employment from, and securing contracts tied to, resource developments in the north.

In 1998, in the mining industry alone, northerners employed directly by the mining companies received $24.5 million in wages. Mines in the construction and operating phases spent over $183.6 million on contracts, goods, and services from northern Saskatchewan businesses and joint venture companies (see figure 4).

Multi-Party Training Plan

The Multi-Party Training Plan coordinates and funds training for northerners, helping to prepare them for jobs in northern Saskatchewan's mining industry.

The Plan was developed by the Mineral Sector Steering Committee of the Northern Labour Market Committee. It involves matching northern training programs with the projected employment needs of the mines.

During its first five years, 1993-98, the Multi-Party Training Plan exceeded its $10.5-million goal and provided $13 million in funding and in-kind contributions to support a broad range of training directly or indirectly related to the mineral industry.

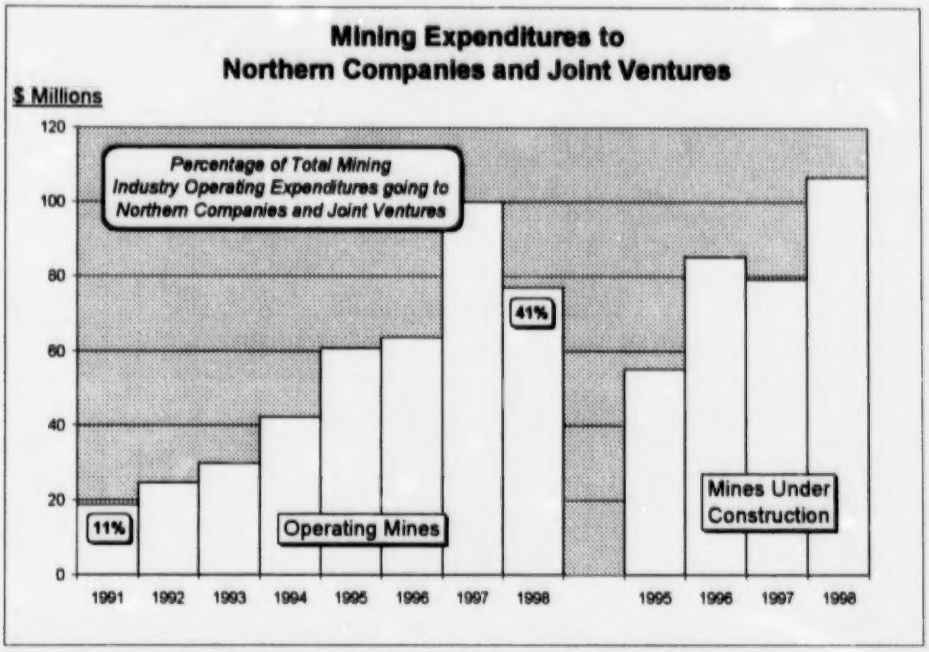

Figure 4. Value of northern business and joint venture contracts awarded by mining companies operating in northern Saskatchewan, 1991-1998.

Many northerners gained rewarding careers as a result of training received through the Plan. During 1993-98 the Plan sponsored 1,130 enrolments in adult education, employment readiness and skills training, including apprenticeship, technical and supervisory training. Most of the training was delivered in the north through Northlands College.

Students of Aboriginal ancestry made up more than 90 per cent of all enrolments in the Plan's training programs. Twenty-six per cent of the enrolments were female students, all of them of Aboriginal ancestry.

During its first five years, the Plan won national and provincial awards for excellence in the development of partnerships among government, industry and communities.

Building on the success of the first Plan, a second $13-million five-year agreement was signed in February 1999. The partners in the second Plan include:

- the provincial government, including Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, Economic and Cooperative Development, and Northern Affairs;
- Human Resources Development Canada and Western Economic Diversification;
- four major mining companies: Cameco Corporation, Cogema Resources Incorporated, Cigar Lake Mining Corporation, and Claude Resources;
- Prince Albert Grand Council and Meadow Lake Tribal Council, representing their 12 northern First Nations located in the Northern Administration District;
- four Metis agencies, including Jim Brady, Northcote Metis, Northern Region III Metis, and Methy Pathways; and
- Northlands College.

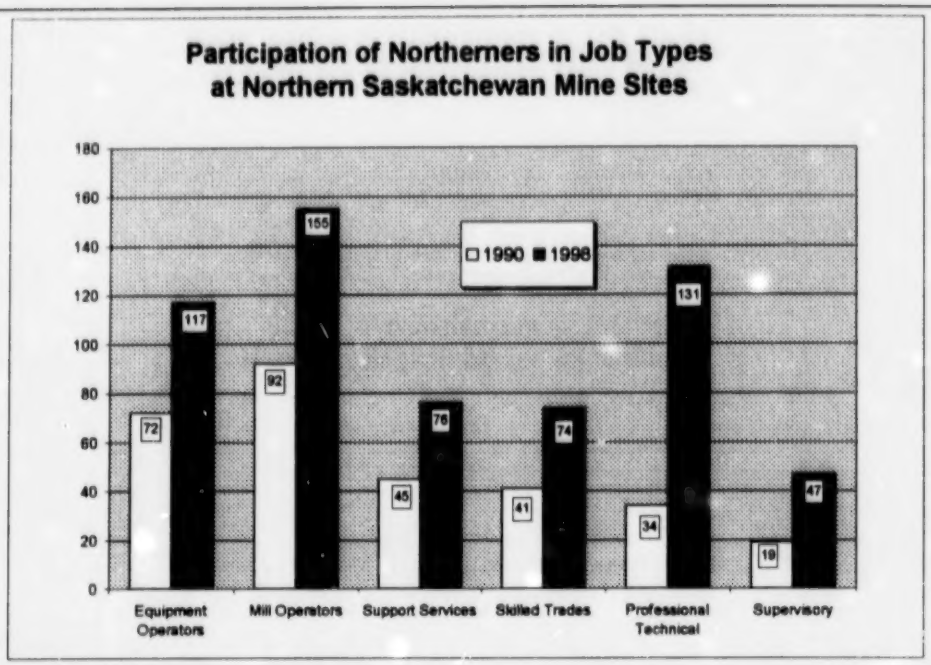

Figure 5. Employment of northerners by job type at northern Saskatchewan mine sites, excluding contractors, 1990-1998 annual averages.

The current Plan oversees assessment and selection of candidates, pre-employment training, skill training, job training, and ongoing retraining and job advancement. The mining companies are participants in the planning process and in the selection of trainees. Successful trainees are hired directly by the companies. Contractors and sub-contractors are also committed to hiring and training northerners as part of the Plan.

The Multi-Party Training Plan has enabled major strides to be made in increasing the number of northerners in the gold and uranium mining industries, and in increasing the skill levels of northerners working at the mines (see figure 5).

The Plan has helped to double the number of northern residents employed at northern mine sites. In 1998, a monthly average of 1,084 northerners worked for mining companies and on-site contractors (see figure 6). During 1998, northerners made up 49.5% of the mining workforce. Eighty-five per cent of these northerners are of Aboriginal ancestry, the highest rate of Aboriginal employment in mining in any region of Canada.

Additional northerners were involved in mining-related employment such as trucking and construction. As well, more than 300 residents of the Creighton-Denare Beach area are employed in mining with the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company in Flin Flon.

Northern Program Coordination

Resource Development Coordination

During 1998-99, the Division helped coordinate many aspects of northern resource development.

The Division reviewed and provided input on policies and programs of other departments and agencies relating to the North, including:

- the development and implementation by Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) of a new Forest Resources Management Act and regulations, a provincial wood analysis study, land use planning, and various environmental policies;

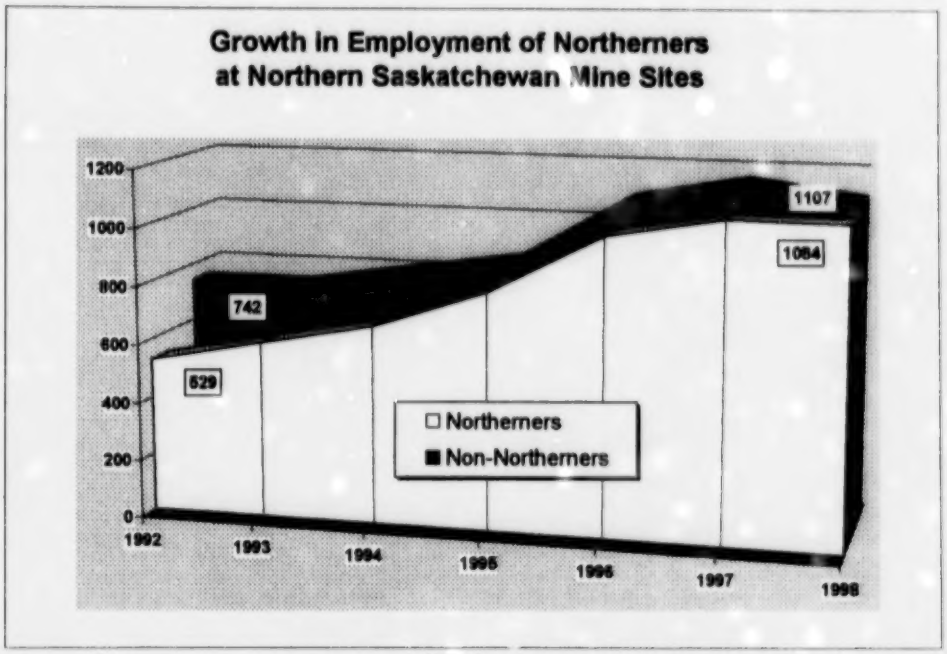

Figure 6. Employment of northerners at northern Saskatchewan mine sites, including contractors, 1992-1998.

- a public discussion document and public involvement process for an Integrated Provincial Water Management Strategy developed by SaskWater Corporation;
- a provincial Aboriginal Policy Framework being developed by Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs in consultation with other provincial departments;
- Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation's development of a process leading to the establishment of Northern Area Transportation Councils in northern Saskatchewan;
- a Class Assessment Discussion Paper developed by SERM to streamline project environmental assessment approval and decision-making by grouping projects with common characteristics together into classes;
- Saskatchewan Energy and Mine's overview: *Mandated Requirements/Guidelines Applicable to Mineral Prospecting, Exploration and Development in Saskatchewan;*
- SERM's proposal for additional resources for monitoring Cigar Lake and Midwest Uranium Projects and evaluation of the Joint Federal-Provincial Review Panel on Uranium Mining Developments;
- a Fees and Crown Land Discussion Paper drafted by Saskatchewan Energy and Mines;
- a Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations' proposal for provincial support for a Natural Resource Management Program, involving the development of skills and the employment of First Nations people in natural resource management;
- Saskatchewan Municipal Government's proposal for the Mandatory Certification of Municipal Water and Wastewater Utility Operators;

- the Pasquia-Porcupine Integrated Forest Land Use Management Plan;
- Parks Canada's Fire Management in Prince Albert National Park - A Proposed Strategy; and
- the federal government's discussion paper *Northern Foreign Policy For Canada — Consultation Paper.*

The Division also responded to various requests from other departments and agencies, the private sector, governments and the public relating to the North. These included:

- reviewing a northern municipality's request for the transfer of Provincial Crown land to the municipality;
- investigating reported public concerns surrounding an abandoned uranium mine that was not decommissioned and reclaimed;
- documenting the establishment, evolution and current capitalization of the SaskPower Northern Enterprise Fund;
- representing the department at the Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association Conference;
- critically evaluating regulatory reform opportunities including those focusing on options for effecting public policy by way of agreements with key stakeholder groups and industries, rather than by legislation; and
- working with SERM to explore options available to manage Crown Land resources for commercial outdoor recreation purposes, such as ecotourism and adventure tourism.

The Division reviewed several Environmental Impact Statements, including: Weyerhaeuser's Environmental Impact Statement for a Twenty-Year Forest Management Plan, and the Twenty-Year Forest Management Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Pasquia-Porcupine Forest Management Area.

Other policy and project proposals reviewed during the course of the year included: Carrier Lumber Ltd.'s proposal for a storage site and planer mill, Wascana Energy's proposed northern oil and gas exploration, Darren Resources proposed silica sand project, Cameco Corporation's processing of Cigar Lake Phase 1 ore at Rabbit Lake, and a proposal for a small-scale open pit mine at the Goldfields site.

The Division maintained membership in a broad range of interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder committees and groups addressing issues and initiatives having potential implications for the North.

Staff participation with the Minister in a June 1998 Northwestern Ministers' Economic Conference in Prince Rupert, B.C., resulted in the initiation of a number of inter-jurisdictional action plans and partnerships in support of northern economic development.

In liaison with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, the Division continued to assess reclamation and decommissioning obligations associated with the former Gunnar and Lorado uranium mines near Uranium City. Gunnar and Lorado were privately-owned mines which were not decommissioned following their closure in the 1960s. Although the environmental impacts from these sites are localized and the sites do not pose a threat to human life, ways are being sought to address all concerns relating to them.

At the Lorado site, the buildings have been decommissioned but significant quantities of acidic tailings remain. At Gunnar, as well as tailings areas, buildings and structures still stand which present public safety concerns.

The Division is working to maximize northern residents' involvement in the planning and decommissioning processes, and is providing support to other provincial departments in their discussions with the federal government on cost-sharing the decommissioning and reclamation of both sites.

Forestry Development

During 1998-99, Northern Affairs worked in cooperation with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development to develop a provincial forest economic development strategy.

Led by SERM's Forest Ecosystems and Economic Development branches, this overall strategy for forestry is based on several principles, including: ecosystem sustainability, enhanced participation in the industry by northern and Aboriginal communities, and expansion into value-added markets.

Strategies are being developed in the areas of wood supply, value-added manufacturing, northern business development and employment, and required research and development.

Related to a forest development strategy, the Division contributed to SERM's proposed new Policy Framework for Wood Supply Allocation, outlining the process by which sustainable use of provincial forests will be achieved.

Social Development Coordination

During 1998-99, the Division was active in a number of social development activities in the North, principally through membership in interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder committees and groups.

Division staff participated in the activities of the Northern Regional Inter-sectoral Committee, which involves several provincial departments. The Committee provides funding to communities and community-based groups in the North, to develop and implement programs and services for children and youth at risk.

Staff also participated in a community consultation project of Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities and Saskatchewan Social Services. The consultations gathered northerners' concerns and issues regarding provincial social assistance programs and services and resources available to residents of northern municipalities.

The project resulted in the report *Northern Saskatchewan Social Development Review, Final Report 1998*, which includes a number of recommendations, based on community input, for enhancing social development in the North.

Other social development activities over the course of the year included:

- providing the Office of Disability Issues with information on northern initiatives, programs or services dealing specifically with the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities;
- reviewing and commenting on Saskatchewan Justice's proposals for the Northern Justice Strategy and Building Safer Communities;
- reviewing and commenting on a draft of the Early Childhood Development Strategy, to help prepare this document for public review by key stakeholders in Spring 1999; and
- reviewing and commenting on various policy and program proposals in the field of human services delivery, including: Early Childhood Development, Employment-Based Training and Support, Neighbourhood Economic Development, Aboriginal Economic Development, and the Review of Tax and Income Support Systems.

The Northern Strategy

Division staff provided support to the operations of the Dialogue with Northern Leaders. The Dialogue process led to:

- the Northern Strategy, adopted by the Province and northern leaders in the summer of 1998; and
- establishment of the Interim Northern Development Board (INDB) in December 1998, a vehicle ensuring northerners' participation in implementation of the Northern Strategy.

(The Northern Strategy is described in the Overview section of this annual report.)

The Division provided support for the INDB's operations, including implementation of Phase I of a comprehensive Strategic Opportunities Assessment of northern economic and social development possibilities.

Strategic Opportunities Assessment

The Strategic Opportunities Assessment project was initiated in January 1999. The Assessment was undertaken in association with the Interim Northern Development Board.

The Assessment is intended to provide a current inventory of economic development and diversification potential in northern Saskatchewan. It will also document infrastructure and capacity building measures necessary to support such development.

The initial phase will provide an overview of opportunities in the region. A second phase will detail development potential in particular sectors of the northern economy.

The Interim Northern Development Board actively participated in establishing the terms of reference for the Assessment, selecting a consulting firm, and serving as a management committee for the project. Funding was provided through Northern Affairs.

Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat and Environmental Quality Committees

The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat and the Environmental Quality Committees, which operate under the auspices of Saskatchewan Northern Affairs, were created in response to the 1993 recommendations of the Joint Federal-Provincial Review Panel on Uranium Mining Developments in Northern Saskatchewan.

Following consultations with northerners during 1993-94 on the best way to respond to these recommendations, the provincial government authorized the establishment of the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat and three Environmental Quality Committees.

The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat (NMMS) and the Environmental Quality Committees (EQCs) are mechanisms for northern communities to communicate with government and industry on uranium mining activities, including environmental protection, worker health and safety, and the socio-economic performance of the mining companies.

The NMMS and EQCs also enable government and industry to share information with northerners on uranium mining projects. The EQCs serve as a bridge between northerners, government, and the uranium industry. The NMMS serves as an administrative support structure to the EQCs, providing information, coordination, and communication services.

Based in La Ronge, the NMMS consists of representatives of all provincial departments having a regulatory or developmental role in the uranium industry in northern Saskatchewan. During 1998-99 these included: Environmental Protection and Environmental Assessment branches of Environment and Resource Management; Occupational Health and Safety Branch of Labour; Northern Branch of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training; Northern Health Services Branch of Saskatchewan Health; Metallic Minerals Branch of Energy and Mines; and Northern Municipal Services, Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing. Both the Resource Policy and Program Coordination and the Economic and Business Development divisions of Northern Affairs have membership on the NMMS.

The Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB), which is the federal nuclear regulatory agency, also has membership on the Secretariat.

The NMMS, chaired by the Executive Director of the Resource Policy and Program Coordination Division, meets from one to three times per year. It receives updates on the work of the EQCs and discusses any concerns or initiatives surrounding the industry.

The EQCs are comprised of representatives of the "impact communities" as defined in the Human Resource Development Agreement negotiated for each uranium mine. Each impact community nominates one primary and up to three alternate representatives for their EQC. Representatives are in place for all six of the Athabasca member communities, 19 South Central communities, and 12 West Side communities. Each EQC has elected a chairperson.

The West Side EQC was chaired by Gerald Regan of Green Lake. It is comprised of impact communities identified in the Cluff Lake Mine Human Resource Development Agreement. The South Central EQC, chaired by Gordon Stomp of Air Ronge, represents impact communities associated with the Key Lake and McArthur River mines. The Athabasca EQC, chaired by June MacDonald of Stony Rapids, includes impact communities related to the Rabbit Lake, McClean Lake, Midwest, and Cigar Lake mine projects.

The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat is staffed by a manager in La Ronge who coordinates and facilitates meetings and workshops for the EQCs, maintains liaison with NMMS member departments and company officials in responding to EQC requests, and provides information to the public.

Uranium mining companies have continued to cooperate with and support the NMMS and the EQCs. Eight visits to different northern mine sites and company head offices were arranged during the year to provide EQC representatives with first-hand experience of the companies' operations.

Other agencies that have assisted the NMMS and the EQCs with information and research include the University of Saskatchewan and the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB).

Accomplishments of the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat

During 1998-99 the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat:

- facilitated the activities of the EQCs and encouraged information flow between the uranium mining industry and the EQCs;
- coordinated more than 25 EQC meetings with NMMS member departments, outside agencies, and uranium mining companies to explain responsibilities and programs such as monitoring schedules, results of environmental studies related to uranium mining, and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) reviews; and
- communicated the activities of the NMMS and EQCs to the public through newsletters, radio, and community meetings.

Throughout the year the manager of the NMMS has responded to numerous requests for information on the NMMS and EQCs and other Northern Affairs' initiatives related to the mineral industry, including presentations to three out-of-province groups and one international conference.

Accomplishments of the Environmental Quality Committees

During 1998-99, the Environmental Quality Committees:

- reviewed, discussed and provided comments on various documents, plans, and programs, including:
  - Evironmental Impact Statements for proposed changes to milling locations at Cigar Lake;
  - a conceptual decommissioning plan for the abandoned Gunnar and Lorado uranium mines, and made an initial visit;
  - a new benchmark template for uranium mine Surface Lease Agreements; and
  - the Cumulative Effects Monitoring Program, managed by SERM;
- participated in site inspection of the abandoned Nisto Mine and a subsequent public meeting at Black Lake to formalize an agreement to rehabilitate the site;

- toured the sites of six operating or proposed uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan, including meetings with executive staff, mine managers, and other personnel;

- toured the Cluff Lake mine site, and participated in the initial Environmental Impact Statement consultations regarding the decommissioning of the Cluff Lake mine;

- reviewed and participated in the Cumulative Effects Monitoring Program, including the monitoring of fish;

- attended workshops on exploration activities, surface leases, community vitality monitoring, and decommissioning requirements and approaches;

- attended and participated in an evaluation workshop focussing on a review of the effectiveness of the hearings held by the 1991-1996 Joint Federal-Provincial Review Panel on Uranium Mining Developments in Northern Saskatchewan; and

- attended the Canadian Minerals Association conference in Saskatoon, which focussed on Aboriginal involvement in mining.

Corporate Services Division

The Corporate Services division of Saskatchewan Northern Affairs includes Communications, Administration and Information Technology services.

Communications

Communications staff prepare a broad range of information about northern topics and Northern Affairs' programs. Materials include news releases, brochures, reports, briefing information, correspondence, displays, informational advertising, the annual report, and a quarterly public newsletter, *Northern Focus*.

Northern Focus is intended to share northern experiences in using provincial government programs, providing referral information for readers wishing further information about particular programs. Staff recruitment delays postponed the launch of a broadcast radio version of *Northern Focus* until 1999-2000.

Communications activities also include assistance in event coordination, speech writing, preparation of audio/visual presentations, and responding to media and public inquiries.

Development of Saskatchewan Northern Affairs' Internet site was initiated during the year, in part to provide communication support for Northern Hire and Northern Procurement policies approved by the government.

A 1998 edition of the Northern Saskatchewan Business Directory was published. Through the Internet web site of the Keewatin Career Development Corporation, the directory was also made available on line where it can be more frequently updated.

Administration

Northern Affairs' Business Manager coordinates annual budget preparation, expenditure monitoring and projections, human resources recruitment and administration, preparation of service contracts, purchasing, accounts payable, and office space and transportation requirements. The Business Manager works closely with officials from the Department of Finance and receives support from the Human Resources and Administrative Services branches of the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development in Regina.

During 1998-99, support was also provided for Employment Equity and Management-Union committees. Initial systems for tracking northern procurement data were implemented to permit evaluation of the effectiveness of the Northern Procurement Policy

Information Technology

An Information Technology officer was recruited in 1998-99 to provide on-site systems support for Northern Affairs' La Ronge offices. The position worked closely with the Systems Services branch of the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development.

A new network server was installed, new file directory structure put in place, improved line access provided to central provincial government servers, and related software upgrades installed.

An initial assessment of database requirements (access and compilation) for planning and evaluation of northern programs was undertaken.

Corporate Management

Corporate Services provided assistance for implementing the Northern Dialogue and Northern Strategy processes – including creation and support of the Interim Northern Development Board. Corporate Services was also assigned Northern Affairs' responsibility for initial implementation of the Northern Hire and Northern Procurement policies.

Financial Report

	1998-99 Estimates	1998-99 Actuals	Notes
Northern Programs Management			
Minister's Office, Regina	325,000.00	348,782.55	
Deputy Minister's Office, La Ronge	378,100.00	504,140.78	
Special Projects	60,000.00	109,812.06	
Northern Dialogue	40,000.00	71,243.40	
Corporate Services	83,700.00	94,023.18	
Communications and Public Information Services	158,200.00	99,705.96	
Northern Database Services	60,700.00	29,115.32	
Business Management Services	142,600.00	331,436.42	
Corporate Policy & Regina Support Services	104,700.00	156,827.92	
	1,353,000.00	1,745,087.59	1.
Transfer from Economic and Business Development Division	394,000.00		
Revised Total	1,747,000.00	1,745,087.59	
Resource Policy and Program Coordination Division			
Resource Policy	208,800.00	123,710.75	
Program Coordination	129,700.00	65,773.01	
Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat	95,500.00	113,992.91	
Environmental Quality Committees – Athabasca West Side, South Central	90,000.00	102,915.31	
Division Total	524,000.00	406,391.98	2.
Economic and Business Development Division			
Executive Director	148,800.00	126,034.09	
Northern Review Board	40,000.00	29,164.61	
Northern Business & Community Economic Development	411,400.00	523,712.27	
Northern Programs and Financial Services	284,800.00	294,227.45	
Northern Programs –			
CREDOs	315,000.00	396,245.92	
Marketing & Research	635,000.00	524,137.64	
Organizational Skill Development	50,000.00	72,311.89	
Northern Development Fund – Loan Loss Provision	1,000,000.00	34,670.00	
	2,883,000.00	2,000,503.87	3.
Transfer to Northern Programs Management	(394,000.00)		
Revised Total	2,489,000.00	2,000,503.87	
Commercial Fishing Freight Subsidy and Price Support Program	345,000.00	288,812.47	4.
Saskatchewan Northern Affairs Total	**5,106,000.00**	**4,440,795.91**	

Financial Report

Notes

1. Additional funds were transferred to Northern Programs Management from the Economic and Business Development Division to address expenses that exceeded original Estimates owing in part to:
   a. funding of the Interim Northern Development Board, established as part of the Northern Strategy approved by the Province and northern political leaders in the summer of 1998;
   b. equipment costs to ensure Y2K readiness; and
   c. additional office accommodation charges.

2. Resource Policy and Program Coordination Division expenses were less than original Estimates owing to staff vacancies during the fiscal year.

3. Economic and Business Development Division expenses were less than original Estimates owing to a very limited requirement to provide for possible Northern Development Fund loan losses. This was partially offset by implementation of the Strategic Opportunities Assessment undertaken as part of the Northern Strategy, increased grants to Community-based Regional Economic Development Organizations (CREDOs), increased support for northern co-operatives, and funding for a review of development options for the wild rice industry in Saskatchewan.

4. Commercial Fishing Freight Subsidy and Price Support Program expenditures are determined by quantities of commercial fish shipped from remote northern Saskatchewan locations to southern buyers.

Contact Information

For more information on the programs and activities of Saskatchewan Northern Affairs, contact:

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Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat
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